

was i made from a broken mold?

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was i made from a broken mold?

by [Literal_Multifandom_Trashcan](#)

Summary

Shane pulled out the vodka handle, wiping the dust off. He stared at it for a long moment.

Shane rarely drank hard liquor. It made his head spin and his stomach uncomfortable, wasn't worth all the extra calories. Wasn't even really meant to drink on his meds, but.

It would make him feel worse. It would make him feel like absolute shit. And that was exactly what Shane was counting on. So he had stumbled over to the bathroom, flipped on the dim overhead light, sunk to the bathroom floor, and drank.

or:

shane hollander gets super drunk on the bathroom floor after a really bad few days. it is not fun for anyone involved, but luckily ilya is there to pick up the pieces

Notes

okay! this one is pretty heavy, its honestly me projecting onto shane once again, but im a little nervous to post it bc im not sure if this is in character-i tried to keep it as close to shanes characterization as possible, but it may be a little ooc so take it with a grain of salt !!!!

also:

TW for self harm mention, thoughts of self harm, intense self deprecation, alcohol consumption in a very self destructive way

please enjoy and stay safe ! <3

Shane Hollander never drank. Well, not *never*, but it was a rare thing, and it was never something out of control. If he did drink it was one, maybe two beers, and then he called a night.

So he was sort of panicking a little bit, sitting alone on his bathroom floor, staring at the half empty bottle of Absolut in front of him. Half empty because he *drank* it, choked it down and resolutely ignored the way it burned his throat and tasted like shit.

Let's rewind.

Montreal had played Boston today. And yesterday Shane's therapist had cancelled their session due to a family emergency, his mom was disappointed in him for accidentally sleeping through a call with a brand to set up a potential deal, *and* he had run out of Zoloft two days ago and hadn't been able to get more due to it being on backorder.

So safe to say he hadn't played his best. He'd spent the afternoon before the game alternating between feeling sick to his stomach in the bathroom, checking his phone for messages from his mom or Ilya, and pacing a hole into the floor. Hayden had checked up on him multiple times before the game, sensing Shane's offness from a mile away.

And once he *got* on the ice, well, it was a shit show. His head wasn't working the way he wanted it to, his body wasn't working the way he wanted it to, he felt hyperaware of all the eyes watching him, expectations weighing heavy on his shoulder.

So Montreal ended up losing. Spectacularly. It was one of the worst hockey games Shane had played in his entire life. He didn't need anyone else to hate him for it-he did that well enough all on his own.

He had held it together long enough to get through press and the despondent air in the locker room, trying his best to ignore the stink eyes he was getting from some of his teammates. Hayden had just watched him worriedly, even after Shane's half-hearted reassurances that he was fine and he'd do better next time.

But the second he stepped into his Montreal apartment, all bets were off.

His chest tightened up, eyes welling with tears. His hands trembled as he stood in the cold kitchen, lights still off, rooted to the ground.

He barely managed a gasp of air before he was bringing his hands up to his head, tugging harshly at his hair. His lower lip trembled. He was certain he looked pathetic.

Shane felt like his chest was caving in on itself, certain that someone had bashed his ribs in with a hammer, that his bones were collapsing in on themselves, digging into his flesh and organs and lungs.

He could feel his phone ringing in his pocket. He didn't bother checking it, instead deciding to wander into the kitchen and rummage through the cabinets. He could already envision his mothers disappointed tone over the phone - she meant well, she always did, but Shane *hated* disappointing people.

The thing about Shane Hollander was that when he was having a mental breakdown, he was filled with the urge to do some very, *very* stupid things. Self-destructive tendencies were woven into his skin.

Because the god honest truth-and Shane knew it, even if no one said it out loud-was that Shane was never, and would never, be good enough. His parents deserved a better son, who's head wasn't fucked up, who didn't lie to them about his sexuality. His teammates deserved a better captain, one who didn't screw up majorly at an important game because he was a basket-case.

And Ilya, *Ilya*. Ilya deserved someone who didn't flee at things getting too personal, who was normal about sex, who didn't overthink everything to the point where it was probably obnoxiously annoying.

So Shane took it upon himself to self-destruct. When he was doing really badly, he had a consistent routine. Self destruct in solitude, break himself apart, tear off his skin and break his bones away, pick away at the loose parts of his soul until he was bloody and aching.

And then, once he recovered from the humiliation of his own brain, he would painstakingly put himself back together. Duck tape and safety pins and loose thread to repair the damage he had done to himself, masked by a thick layer of paint to uphold the facade that he had been keeping up since basically forever.

It wasn't healthy, by any means, Shane didn't need his therapist to tell him this. But in emergency situations like tonight, it was something he could fall back on. The stupid fucking breathing techniques and the cbt exercises had a *chance* of doing something, maybe, but this cycle of self flagellance was familiar and comforting and routine.

So he was dead-set on finding the bottle buried deep in his kitchen cabinet. It was a handle of Absolut vodka, one that Hayden had brought over months ago, as a stupid gag gift in case Shane wanted to '*let loose*'.

Shane pulled it out, wiping the dust off. He stared at it for a long moment.

Shane rarely drank hard liquor. It made his head spin and his stomach uncomfortable, wasn't worth all the extra calories. Wasn't even really *meant* to drink on his meds, but.

It would make him feel worse. It would make him feel like absolute shit. And that was exactly what Shane was counting on. So he had stumbled over to the bathroom, flipped on the dim overhead light, sunk to the bathroom floor, and drank.

Two big sips in, Shane felt the burn settle at his stomach, felt his body buzzing nicely. Vodka tasted very, *very* bad with no chaser and when not in a cocktail. He couldn't remember the last time he had gotten tipsy, much less drunk.

Shane's head thumped against the bathroom wall. He stared at the handle of alcohol, imagined how disappointed his parents would be if they could see him right now, remembered the way the media had called the game earlier one of the worst ones of his career.

He took another big drink. He grimaced at the taste, fighting to keep the liquid down. The next sip was easier, though. Much, much easier.

Shane could feel the air against his skin. Could feel the weight of the glass in his hands, could feel the way guilt and shame settled in his gut like they belonged there. Maybe they did.

And that was how they got-well, here. With a now half empty bottle of strong vodka sitting in front of Shane who was *definitely* drunk, stewing in self hatred and loathing and wondering why he ever thought this was a good idea.

He went to stand up, put the bottle away, but was immediately hit with an *intense* wave of dizziness that sent him right back onto his ass.

Oh shit, when's the last time I ate today? Shane wracked his brain for the answer. Probably... he'd had a protein bar that morning. He avoided eating before games, tended to get too anxious, didn't want to risk the food coming back up.

Normally it was fine, because he'd eat one of his meal prepped salads after the game to refuel. But no-tonight he'd gone and drank a shit ton of 80 proof vodka on a basically empty stomach like an idiot.

Shane sighed. Stared across the bathroom at the wall. Unwillingly, his eyes welled up with tears. He could feel himself crumbling, felt like this whole night he'd been falling and falling and falling with nothing to catch him.

On nights like this, Shane wondered who he was. Seriously, genuinely considered who Shane Hollander was outside of hockey player, face of the NHL, serious-faced and a little awkward but a beast on the ice.

Take hockey away, take the ice away, and who was Shane? What did he bring to the table, what did he contribute to society, how could people even stand to be around him? Hayden was a hockey player, yes, but he was also a father and a husband, a guy who enjoyed going out and playing pool, a guy with hobbies outside of skating.

And Shane was just...nothing. He wasn't a good son, wasn't smart, didn't have any academic achievements beyond graduating high school with subpar grades. He had no hobbies other than weightlifting and meticulously tracking his every meal. Ilya was a star hockey player, yes, but he was also a womanizer, shockingly kind and considerate, a brother, a good son, and *beautiful*.

Shane was all of a sudden acutely aware of the tears on his face, the clothes sticking against his skin, the fact that he hadn't showered after the game. He felt disgusting.

He pushed himself off the ground, once again trying to stand up. This time was marginally more successful, using the wall as leverage to get himself upright. The world swayed, vision tilting, but Shane managed through sheer determination.

His hand must have been sweaty, or maybe his grip on the bottle was too loose, because the moment he had himself upright, the bottle of vodka fell right out of his hands. Shane watched in interest as it fell down to the ground.

It shattered. The noise made Shane jump a little. Glass went everywhere, along with vodka spilling all over the floor. He wrinkled his nose. Now his whole bathroom smelled like alcohol.

It also occurred to Shane, as he glanced down at the bathroom floor, that there was blood. His blood. His sight travelled to his bare feet, which had multiple little shards of glass in them. Shane blinked.

Right. Dropping a bottle made of glass right next to your feet with no protection while super drunk and in the middle of the worst panic episode of your life. Genius idea, Shane. Nice one.

That was...annoying.

What had he been trying to do again? Shane ran through his thoughts from the past minute, trying to remember why he had been so determined to stand up in the first place.

Shower. Yes, shower sounded good. Turning the water so hot to the point where it reddened Shane's skin, standing in there until maybe his body stopped feeling like he was going to get murdered any second, until his brain went quiet just for a little bit.

Shane was pulled out his thoughts by the feeling of his phone buzzing in his pocket. He, with what felt like monumental effort, pulled it out, staring at the screen. Had it been going off this whole time? He couldn't remember.

Squinting his eyes, Shane read through his notifications. A missed call from his mom followed by a few texts from her, a handful of texts from Hayden and Jackie, and weirdly enough, like ten missed calls from Ilya.

The phone buzzed again. It was Ilya calling him. Shane's brain felt like it was wading through mud, trying to keep up with everything that was going on.

He did *really* want to hear Ilya's voice though. Shane couldn't remember if they had planned to meet up tonight. Maybe that was why Ilya was calling?

Shane wasn't sure he was up for sex, though. The thought of Ilya seeing him naked right now sent a pang of nausea and disgust through him. He didn't need a mirror to know he looked ugly as hell right now. And it wouldn't be fair to Ilya, because Shane was certain he'd find a way to use them hooking up as some sort of self-punishment.

Shane accepted the call, putting the phone on speaker.

"Shane? Shane! Thank fucking god you picked up. What happened? Did your phone die or something? Pike has been non-stop texting me telling me to check on you. He is like crazy manager or something."

Shane was unable to stop the smile that pulled at his face at Ilya's voice. He leaned against the bathroom sink, wincing a little at the way the motion irritated his injured feet.

"Ilya!" Shane exclaimed.

There was silence on the other end. And then...

"Are you *drunk*?" Ilya asked incredulously.

Shane hummed.

"Maybe a little." Shane slurred out. He leaned forwards, staring at himself in the mirror, before immediately deciding that was a bad idea, strong wave of hatred surging through him at the sight of his own reflection.

Did he always look that pathetic?

"Shane, what the fuck. You did not go out tonight, otherwise Pike wouldn't be freaking the fuck out." He heard some rusting on the other end of the phone. "Where are you? How much did you drink? And *why*?"

Shane could hear the concern in Ilya's voice. It made him feel fucking *sick*. He glanced away from the mirror down to the shards of glass on the floor. He wondered-briefly-how it would feel to pick one up and slice it over his skin, watch the blood bubble over.

He'd done it before. Back when he was fourteen and stupid and the world felt like it was ending as it always does when one is fourteen. Grabbed one of the disposable razors his dad had gotten him and slid the small razor across his upper thighs a few times.

He wasn't depressed. It wasn't really about that. It had been about control, about how he'd fucked up somehow by existing and needed to take the punishment into his own hands.

The cuts had healed into small, silvery scars that were barely noticeable. Hell, he wasn't even sure Ilya had noticed them. Shane had stopped all those years ago because he'd heard his parents laughing in the kitchen and was hit with a wave of guilt so deep it had driven him to put the razor in the trash and go to bed.

Because back then, and even now, all Shane had thought was that he had no reason to be like this. He had two parents who loved him, a career in the sport he loved, family who supported him. Meanwhile other people had things actually fucking wrong in their lives and there Shane had been, feeling bad for himself when in reality he was taking oxygen away from someone who would've killed to be in his position.

It *was* tempting. The glass on the ground held a certain allure to it, sharp edges calling to Shane. He wouldn't-*couldn't*, not with constantly undressing in locker rooms and being with Ilya.

Still, though, Shane imagined.

"M'at home. In my bathroom. I had...mm, maybe half a bottle?" Shane estimated. He wished he hadn't shattered the bottle so he could properly estimate. Oh, well.

Ilya made a noise of confusion over the phone.

"Of beer?" Ilya asked hopefully. It was an understandable question-every time Shane had drank around Ilya it had always been beer.

Shane giggled a little at the question. It wasn't funny.

"Nope. Of, uh, vodka. Absolut?" Shane wasn't sure about the brand, the label had long since escaped his head. Ilya cursed over the phone. Even though it wasn't a nice word, Shane still thought it sounded nice coming out of Ilya's mouth.

He loved listening to Ilya talk.

“Hollander, *what the fuck*. I am coming over. You drank half bottle of Absolut? You never drink. Three beers is enough to make you tipsy. When is last time you ate today?” Ilya sounded frantic over the line.

Shane swallowed the saliva that was starting to pool in his mouth. He was nauseous, all of a sudden, body going cold. Rather than respond to Ilya, Shane dropped down to his knees, retching into the toilet.

His eyes burned with tears at the glass that was now digging into his shins. Bile burned at his throat, nothing coming up other than vodka and stomach acid.

Fuck, his head hurt.

He tuned in to Ilya, who was steadily reassuring Shane as he got ready to go to Shane’s apartment.

“Okay, okay, you are okay, deep breaths. I wish I was there to rub your back. I will be there soon, okay? Hotel is twenty minutes away. I am getting in car now.” Ilya murmured. Shane could hear the purring of a car engine in the background.

He allowed himself to rest his head against the rim of the shower tub, sucking in sharp inhaleds in a pathetic attempt to follow Ilya’s instructions. Every breath he took felt like it was stabbing at his lungs, chest tight and head swimming.

He felt really, *really* bad.

“I had, um, breakfast this morning. Protein bar. And you don’t-you don’t have to come. I don’t want to like, ruin your night.” Shane mumbled. Shame filled his chest at the fact that Ilya had probably planned to go out with his team to celebrate their win, and now he was

stuck going to Shane's sad, dark apartment because Shane was an idiot who couldn't handle life the same way everyone else did.

Ilya made an irritated noise over the phone.

"You are not. I am going because I want to. Do not be stupid. Did you eat anything else today besides protein bar?" Ilya asked.

Shane pursed his lips. He should flush the toilet, get rid of the vomit. Clean up the glass on the ground, bandage up the wounds on his knees and feet, go to the kitchen to turn the lights on and drink water and pretend to be even a semblance of a normal person.

Instead he just sat uselessly. The bathroom smelled like a mix of throwup and vodka and depression permeated the air like it was the plague.

"No. Was too anxious."

Ilya sighed over the phone. Shane stayed quiet. His chest stayed heavy. It felt like all he was good at recently was disappointing people.

"No wonder you are so drunk. I just got here, coming up the stairs now. Can you open door?" Ilya asked bluntly.

Shane glanced at the state of his feet and knees, wincing a little at the thought of somehow avoiding all the glass on the ground, walking with little gashes on the bottoms of his feet all the way to the kitchen.

"Not, um, not really? My feet are sort of...bleeding." Shane said weakly. He could already sort of predict Ilya's reaction - to be honest, it didn't sound great, saying it out loud.

“Bleeding?! You are bleeding? What? I am coming in using extra key you gave me. You are still in bathroom?” Ilya sounded even more worried at the mention of blood, not that Shane could blame him.

Shane didn’t bother to respond-he could hear the door opening and the sound of frantic footsteps thudding down the hall. He lifted his head up to glance at Ilya, who was now standing in the bathroom doorway.

The worst part was he still looked as good as ever. Cheeks flushed slightly from the cold and the running to get to Shane’s apartment, hair tousled and perfectly curly, puffy jacket still pulled around his shoulders, striped blue socks (because Shane would kill Ilya if he kept his shoes on, regardless of how dire the situation was).

His gaze travelled from the floor, to the vomit in the toilet, to Shane. He looked really worried, like really, *really* worried. Shane wondered why.

Shane brought up a hand to weakly wave at Ilya, smiling genuinely for what felt like the first time all day.

“Ilya! You came.” Shane exclaimed enthusiastically.

Ilya just furrowed his brow, smiling tightly.

“Yes. Shane, what happened? You know what - I will not ask right now. You are not in good space to talk. Just sit right there okay? Do *not* move. I will bring you water and clean up bathroom, then bandage your feet and...knees? Yes. Okay.” Ilya nodded to himself, resolute at his plan.

Shane just nodded along.

“Yeah, s’good idea. Probably shouldn’t be near glass anyways. S’too tempting.” Shane mumbled to himself. He hadn’t really stopped picturing the edges of the glass shards,

imagining how satisfying it would feel.

Ilya's gaze sharpened as he paused in his leaving of the bathroom to grab a broom and a dustpan.

"*What* do you mean by that?" Ilya asked sharply, eyes locked onto Shane. Shane flushed. He hadn't meant to say that out loud. Now Ilya would be all worried for nothing. It wasn't like he was going to do anything stupid (well-that was a lie, because he'd been doing stupid things all night, but Shane would never do something like that with Ilya around, not with his history with his mother).

Shane exhaled.

"Nothing. S'nothing. Forget I said anything."

Ilya just stared at Shane for a long moment.

"For now I will forget, but in morning we will talk." Ilya's tone left no room for argument from Shane. That was fair. He kind of walked right into that one.

Shane just sat silently, watching as Ilya swept up glass shards into a bag with quick efficiency before wiping up the vodka off the floor with a paper towel and Shane's favorite cleaning spray (non-scented) and flushing away the throw up from earlier.

With the bathroom floor finally clean, Ilya walked in with the small first aid kit Shane kept in his bedroom, kneeling in front of Shane. Shane just stared at him, all of a sudden feeling the soberest he'd felt all night.

Yeah, okay, he'd fucked up. Shane never meant for anyone to see this part of him, never meant to let anyone get close enough to see *this*, his well guarded most shameful secret. And now Ilya was in front of him, looking at Shane with love and worry and care that he didn't deserve, that was being wasted on a shell of a person.

“M’sorry.” Shane murmured miserably as Ilya lifted up one of his feet, gently using tweezers to remove any small shards of glass before blotting at the tiny cuts with a gauze pad. None of the cuts were particularly deep at all, just numerous and in an extremely inconvenient place.

Ilya leaned forwards and kissed Shane’s thigh over his pants before starting to bandage up the cuts.

“Nothing to be sorry for. I will not say it is okay, because it is obviously not okay, but I am here. We will figure it out.”

Shane sniffled. He watched as Ilya finished up his feet before moving to wipe at the scrapes on his knees, placing little bandaids over the scrapes. They were Snoopy bandaids-his dad insisted years ago that Snoopy was paramount to healing quickly, that normal bandaids wouldn’t do the trick.

“Let’s get you to your bed, yes? I will bring you water and a snack.” Ilya said firmly. He helped Shane up, essentially carrying Shane’s full bodyweight as he stumbled alongside Ilya to his room.

Ilya had turned the lights on in the apartment. It helped make Shane feel less like he was dying. He flopped onto his bed without prompting, groaning in satisfaction at the feeling of the soft mattress underneath him.

Ilya left and then came back, nudging at Shane to sit up. He had shrugged off his puffer jacket, and he had been wearing a short-sleeved shirt underneath. Shane shamelessly admired his biceps.

He handed Shane a glass of cold water. In his other hand was a Snickers bar.

“Here, drink.”

Shane drank. Water never tasted so delicious in his life.

“You should really eat, too. I have candy bar, but in morning I will order real food. You are huge idiot, drinking a ton of vodka on empty stomach. You are already lightweight.” Ilya said, worry lining his tone.

Shane just shrugged, setting down the water and taking a bite of the Snickers bar. The chocolate stuck to the roof of his mouth in an uncomfortable way, but he managed to choke down the rest of the candy for Ilya’s sake, following it with another mouthful of water.

Ilya looked satisfied at Shane’s consumption of food and water, setting both aside on the nightstand before toeing off his socks and jeans, helping Shane shrug out of his own pants. He hopped onto the bed next to Shane.

Shane flopped himself onto Ilya, resting his head in Ilya’s lap, staring up at him. Ilya smiled tightly at Shane, bringing a hand down to rub through Shane’s hair.

“Go to sleep, moya lyubov. It is late. I will be here in the morning.”

Shane just stared up at Ilya for a few moments before rolling over a bit so his head was shoved into Ilya’s chest.

“Sorry you have to take care of me.” Shane spoke into Ilya’s shirt, the words muffled.

Ilya just heaved a long sigh. He gently scratched at Shane’s scalp, pulling the man in so they were properly laying down.

“Shane. You do not have to keep apologizing. Taking care of you is-it is as easy as breathing, to me.”

Shane nodded against Ilya, eyes feeling heavy. He focused on the rise and fall of Ilya's chest, on the fingers running through his hair.

His head felt empty, *finally*.

Shane fell asleep.

Shane's alarm went off with a shrill ring, and Shane instinctively turned it off, curling in on himself with a loud groan.

God, his head was *killing* him. What the fuck had he drank last night?

Blairily, Shane forced his eyes open, cringing at the sunlight beaming through the windows. He tried his best to remember what had happened last night. The bed smelled like Ilya, but the man was suspiciously absent.

Shane blinked a few times, slowly sitting up. And then, everything came back to him.

Oh, fuck his entire life.

A sense of dread rushed through him, and Shane started mentally bracing himself for Ilya to leave. To walk in and tell Shane that he couldn't handle his bullshit, that he was going to go find someone *normal*.

Shane swallowed, throat dry.

He was pulled out of his spiraling by footsteps. Ilya appeared in the doorway of the bedroom, looking thrilled that Shane was awake. In his hands he had a plate with a delicious looking bacon egg and cheese bagel sandwich.

Shane's mouth watered. It smelled so good, but it wasn't in his diet plan at *all*.

"You are up! Good. I ordered food for you. Eat, and then we will talk." Ilya brought the plate over to Shane. Shane stared down at the food for a long moment.

He didn't like eating in his bed, and the thought of breaking his diet so severely had him feeling a bit anxious. But one glance at Ilya's hopeful face had Shane taking a bite and immediately groaning in satisfaction.

It was so good. Shane understood why Ilya always ordered greasy room service food if he went clubbing the night before. Shane polished off the bagel in quick succession, making pleased noises in the back of his throat with every bite.

He glanced at Ilya, who was now looking a bit more serious. Shane frowned down at the empty plate.

"We don't have to talk about it. I just-had a bad day, got a bit drunk, it's whatever. No big deal." The excuses sounded weak even to Shane's ears.

"I think we both know that is not true. Shane, you *never* get drunk. Especially not alone in your dark apartment on enough vodka to make you drop the bottle and step in glass."

Shane sighed, looking away from the plate to Ilya.

"I don't know what you want me to say." Shane mumbled.

Ilya frowned at Shane, looking a little desperate.

“Shane, I just want you to *talk* to me. I will listen, but I cannot help if I don’t understand.” Ilya said genuinely.

Shane worried his lower lip.

“I’ve just-the past few days have been...um, hard. My therapist cancelled. My mom is disappointed, I think. I haven’t had my meds in like four days. I played like shit yesterday. I just, I do this sometimes.” Shane gestured to the mess that was his hungover, bandaged self. “Ever since I was younger. When things get too much, too hard. I shut myself away and sort of...reset. I was working on not doing that, but sometimes it's simpler than trying to do all the therapy stuff.”

Ilya made an alarmed noise in the back of his throat.

“You have been having these breakdowns since you were how old?” Ilya asked. Shane shrugged, thinking back.

“Maybe...twelve? I’d just get so anxious, and then upset with myself for feeling anxious, because nothing in my life is really *wrong*, you know? I have parents who support me. Money. I play the sport I love for a living. So I’d just kind of spiral from there. But I’ve learned how to deal with it. I just...never thought I’d deal with it, um, not alone?” Shane’s tone tilted into a question towards the end. He felt rubbed raw at the honesty, but Ilya was the one who’d had to deal with him last night, so he deserved an explanation.

Ilya looked physically pained at the thought of a twelve-year old Shane Hollander huddled in his childhood bedroom wearing the despondent, self-loathing look that Shane had worn last night.

“You will not deal with it alone again. I will not let you. Shane, you *scared* me last night. I have never seen you like that before. Talk to me, please, before drinking on the bathroom floor alone in the dark.”

Shane looked guiltily into Ilya's eyes.

“Okay. Okay, I'll talk to you. Before it, you know, gets so bad.” Shane promised.

Ilya nodded. He grasped Shane's hands, leaning forwards to kiss Shane's forehead gently.

“And because I love you and will not let this go, what did you mean about the glass last night?” Ilya asked. Shane thought back to last night, trying to figure out what exactly Ilya was referencing.

Oh.

Probably shouldn't be near glass anyways. S'too tempting

Shane swallowed down the burning sensation building at the base of his throat. He leaned into Ilya, ignoring the plate that was now sliding off his lap.

“I, uh, I've never, said this out loud to anyone before? But a few times, when I was younger, I, um, injured myself. Like, on purpose.” Saying he cut himself sounded too serious, made it sound like a bigger deal than it was. “I wasn't actually going to do anything. I haven't, not since I was fourteen or fifteen. But I was-last night my head wasn't in a good place, really, and so I just ended up thinking about it.”

Shane felt awkward confessing his self harm tendencies out loud. He thought he'd feel relieved to share with Ilya, or maybe anxious or upset, but he really just felt...awkward. Out of place.

Ilya tilted Shane's head up, capturing him in a chaste kiss. When they pulled away from each other, Shane noticed that Ilya had tears in his eyes. His own eyes widened in alarm, and he brought his hand up to cup at Ilya's cheek, ready to wipe the tears away if they fell.

“I am glad you told me. You *promise* to tell me if you feel like that again. Please, Shane. I cannot-” Ilya broke off, looking away and swallowing harshly. A tear dripped down his cheek. Shane wiped it away. “I cannot find another person I love dead. Okay?”

Shane pressed his forehead into Ilya’s.

“Ilya. *Ilya*, look at me.” Shane said seriously. Ilya’s eyes found Shane’s own. “I would never, *ever* put you through that. I promise I’ll come to you. And-and you promise me, please, that you’ll come to me, too? Because-” This time it was Shane’s turn to start crying. “you mean everything to me. And obviously you have your therapist and I have mine and mental illness is stupid and makes everything really fucking hard, but I’m here for all of it, if you’ll let me.” Shane’s voice trailed down to a whisper.

Ilya kissed him again. They were both crying, Shane more so than Ilya because he tended to be sort of a crybaby. Their lips met and Shane tried his best to press his soul into Ilya through their contacted skin, tried to reassure Ilya that no matter how bad things got he’d never leave Ilya, not like that.

“Okay.” Ilya whispered, pulling away to wipe at Shane’s tears.

“Okay, enough crying. You will talk to me when you get like this again, and I will talk to you if I feel heavy and if eating and drinking and moving feels too hard. Now let’s cuddle all day and watch stupid romance movies you like so much.” Ilya said.

Shane pouted at Ilya through his wet eyes.

“Hey, that’s not fair. You *loved* 27 dresses, don’t lie to me.” Shane exclaimed. Ilya rolled his eyes at Shane, climbing next to him until they were borderline fused into each other.

“*You* are liar. Big fat liar who lies. But I will sit through gross romantic films anyways, because I love you.”

Shane grinned softly at Ilya. A real, genuine smile.

“Love you, too.”

Maybe it was okay that Ilya had seen Shane last night, at what was arguably his worst. Because somehow Ilya was still *here*, next to Shane, saying he loved him.

Shane thought he could manage bad days-especially if Ilya was by his side through them like this. He snuggled into Ilya.

His chest felt lighter than it had all week. For once, he wasn't thinking of his parents, of the media, of the game last night.

He was just thinking about how *content* he felt, safe in his own head next to Ilya.

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